



Something Wicked

Carolyn G. Hart

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Everyone--including mystery bookstore owner Annie Laurance--loves Arsenic and Old Lace. But something wicked is poisoned a local summer stock production as cast members stab each other in the back and props are sabotaged. Worst of all, the star, aging Hollywood beach-blanket hunk Shane Petree, butchers his lines--while getting top billing in bed with wives and teenage daughters around town. No wonder somebody wants to draw his final curtain. With a little help from Miss Marple, Poirot, and Agatha the Bookstore Cat, a pompous prosecutor tries to pin a murder on Max, Annie's own leading man. Unless Annie can prove her darling's innocence, their wedding date's off! Invoking the tried-and-true methods of her favorite literary sleuths, Annie snoops around the greasepaint and glitter of the show-stopper scene if she doesn't watch it, because theatrical murderers never play fair.

Something Wicked Details

Date : Published (first published May 1st 1988)

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Author : Carolyn G. Hart

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Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery

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From Reader Review Something Wicked for online ebook

Kristen says

I really liked the first book in this series, but the second and this one fell flat for me.

After the first book, Annie has become whiny and petulant. She always seems to be crabbing about something and I found everything about her just irritating.

I had hoped for a new favourite series, but this book proved that this won't be something I'll be sticking with.

Gloria Brzny says

this book was slow moving not the usual action type I'm used to. it has a lot of description and the action waits until you are half-way thru the book. the characters are a bit confusing . it might have been better to include a list of characters with something about them and who they played on stage. this is the first book in this series that I have read.,might not try another one.

Chris says

Not as good as the first 2, I don't know why, maybe I read it at the wrong time? In any event, I will go on with the series because, being a bookoholic and the protagonist being a mystery bookstore owner...it just seems right...lol

Dharia Scarab says

Just couldn't hold my interest.

Since I don't normally write reviews unless I have something specific to say, here's the break down of how I rate my books...

1 star... This book was bad, so bad I may have given up and skipped to the end. I will avoid this author like the plague in the future.

2 stars... This book was not very good, and I won't be reading any more from the author.

3 stars... This book was ok, but I won't go out of my way to read more, But if I find another book by the author for under a dollar I'd pick it up.

4 stars... I really enjoyed this book and will definitely be on the look out to pick up more from the series/author.

5 stars... I loved this book! It has earned a permanent home in my collection and I'll be picking up the rest of the series and other books from the author ASAP.

Katie Bee says

This wasn't really to my taste. Unfortunate, because I thought it definitely would be; murder set in a theatre context is usually a bulletproof like of mine, and I also thought I would enjoy the allusions to other mystery novels and sleuths.

Sadly, the allusions were too indiscriminate and numerous, and the plot was lackluster. The victim and murderer were clear from the beginning, sapping the drama out of the story, and the red herrings were limp and unpersuasive. Meanwhile, the protagonist's fiancée and future mother-in-law weren't just uninteresting, they were downright annoying, even infuriating. He's patronizing and high-handed, and refuses to stop his mother from being a holy terror, even finding his fiancée's strongly-expressed unhappiness to be amusing. Run, Annie, run!

I would not read another book in this series.

C. says

“**Something Wicked**”, 1988, was awful. A cat was killed!!!!!!! In horror, we hold our breath, knowing demented crap is the reason for that label. Animals aren't harmed even in that genre unless authors want us horrified. I never consider it acceptable but in a mother F'ing “*cozy mystery*”, in jealousy over someone a character was leaving anyway? Trivial spite, at a “*cozy mystery*” town play!?? The traditional victim takes chapters to appear, we don't regret who it is, and know the killer straight off. On page 108, **Carolyn G. Hart**, called on her jacket a cat-lover, gives her supposed cat-loving heroine this dialogue: “*What happened to Freddie was unusually nasty but it was a far cry from murder*” What!?

I am appalled at the idea, that only a human death is murder; that solely human deaths count! Was this novel mislabelled? The rest entailed behaviour that was stupid, a novel bent on being comedic. I would normally have enjoyed fellow sleuth, Hetty, invoking fictional detectives. I am an Emily Pollifax and Sister Mary Helen fan. It is hard to imagine a citizen taking a murder as seriously as Hetty does, playing with costumes but I loved it. Admiration was spread thinly. We can suspend disbelief but need a foundation of natural behaviour to support liberties. There were nothing but liberties and little about characterization I respected.

The lamest shtick was committed: arresting the protagonist's lover. Even if I granted that cliché, no investigator would ignore leads. No bias would be tolerated. He would be fired. I wish that were all. Annie and Max are annoying. Inability to like the main characters bodes poorly. We plummeted to one star because Max's mother took up 50% of the book, bugging Annie about wedding ideas. The author considered her oeuvre enough of a comedy to support Max's mother obsessed with wedding-planning, instead of obsessing over understandable peril. If **Ms. Hart** prefers comedy, stop trying to carve these into mysteries and don't kill cats!!!!!!!

Kwoomac says

Yuck. Convoluted mystery (with lots of references to better mysteries). I hate this series, yet picked yet another of them up in search of a quick read. Murder takes place during rehearsal for amateur production of "Arsenic and Old Lace". Lots of references to this as well. Better to stick to reading the stories she mentioned. Please don't let me read another one of these books.

Kathy Davie says

Third in the Death on Demand mystery series set in a bookstore specializing in mysteries and run by Annie Laurence on Broward's Rock Island in South Carolina.

In 1989, *Something Wicked* won the Anthony Award for Best Paperback Original; in 1988, it won the Agatha Award for Best Novel.

My Take

There is a very Agatha Christie feel to this mystery, so it's understandable that it won an Agatha award. I have to confess that Annie was very annoying in this story. She takes everything so seriously. Part of me wanted to either smack Annie and tell her to lighten up while another part wanted Annie to smack Max for his being so very amused by the situation. If Annie would simply remember that it's a) her wedding and b) Laurel can't do much without her permission, she'd have a much easier time of it — as would Max. It would probably help if Annie were to actually *do* something about planning her wedding instead of leaving it up in the air.

It's too funny that Henny keeps running around helping Annie detect by assuming the costume and manner of a different fictional lady detective every day. I'm really impressed that she puts so much effort into the costuming and speech. Where does she find the time?

As always, Hart pulls in comparisons with a multitude of mystery authors, their primary themes, and the characters in their individual series. I've certainly been making my own list of new authors to read.

The Story

Laurel is driving Annie nuts with her suggestions about the wedding. One day it's the Chinese tradition of wearing red and another day it's the Korean custom of the "groom riding a donkey to the bride's house carrying a goose and a gander as a symbol of fidelity" or the Fijian custom of giving a whale's tooth or holding the wedding on top of a pyramid or...

Meanwhile, the Broward's Rock Players are desperate for a financially successful season. After their playhouse burned down in January, the land's owner, Harley Jenkins is threatening to lease the land to a retail shop. The players have to finish the season in the black, if they want Jenkins to rebuild the theater.

Doubt reigns over the first play of the season when they're stuck with Shane Petree. His wife has promised to cover all the expenses for the play if Shane plays Teddy in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. And Shane is blowing their efforts with his lack of application. No one, however, can decide if it's one of the players or Jenkins who is sabotaging the rehearsals as well.

But it's the party at Sheridan's house that puts Max in the frame as the killer and the sheriff is putting off Annie's efforts to free him.

The Characters

Annie Laurance runs Death on Demand, a bookstore specializing in mysteries and based on Broward's Rock. She has a preference for fast food while Max wants healthy. *Guess who'll be doin' the cookin' in this household!* Annie is playing Elaine in the play.

Max Darling is a wealthy lawyer playing at detective while his mother Laurel terrorizes Annie about their upcoming September wedding. Max is playing Mortimer in the play. **Laurel** is a wealthy globe-trotting woman who finds a new cultural tradition every other day that she wants Annie to incorporate into her simple, small wedding. A very touchy-feely, woo-woo kind of woman.

Harley Edward Jenkins III is the CEO of Halcyon Development, owner of the land on which the theater stood. **Burt Conroy** is president of the Broward Rock Players and stage manager. He made a deal with **Sheridan Petree** to cast her husband **Shane** as Teddy Roosevelt. **Carla Fontaine** runs an art gallery in town and is the set designer and chief carpenter. **Arthur Killeen** is the local druggist playing Dr. Einstein. **Henny Brawley** is one of Annie's best customers and plays Aunt Abby. **Sam Haznine** is the director desperate for a hit back to the top; his current sweetie is not at all happy to be stuck on Broward's Rock. **Hugo Wolf** plays Jonathan; a heavy hitter with a presence currently retired from his law career. Feel bad for **T.K. Horton** as he has to cope with both of his women's obsessions: his cheating wife **Janet** who plays Aunt Martha and their daughter **Cindy** having an affair. **Eugene Ferramond** should have played Teddy; he's perfect physically and obsessed with every detail about this Roosevelt's life. Instead Eugene is playing Officer O'Hara.

Chief Saulter is on Annie and Max's side, but he does have to abide by Posey's rulings. Publicly. **Brice Willard Posey** is an idiot more impressed with his own grandstanding than actually finding out the truth. *I do wish that Hart had given us some enjoyment at his "downfall"*. **Jed McClanahan** is the lawyer Annie found for Max. **Sue Kay Conrad** provides a major clue in the case with help from **Mrs. Harriet MacKenzie**.

The Cover and Title

The cover is spooky with the red velvet theatre curtains parted exposing the trumpet, a playbook, a lit candelabra, and the floating veiled skull grinning out at us! Eeek! The label pinned to the drapery certainly doesn't help!

The title does indeed herald *Something Wicked* about this group of people.

Kate says

"Everyone -- including mystery bookstore owner Annie Lawrence -- loves *Arsenic and Old Lace*. But something wicked is poisoning a local summer stock production as cast members stab each other in the back and props are sabotaged. Worst of all, the star, aging Hollywood beach-blanket hunk Shane Petree, butchers his lines -- while getting top billing in bed with wives and teenage daughters around town. No wonder somebody wants to draw his final curtain.

"A pompous prosecutor tries to pin a murder on Max, Annie's own leading man. Unless Annie can prove her

Darling's innocence, their wedding date's off! Invoking the tried-and-true methods of her favorite literary sleuths, Annie snoops around the greasepaint and glitter of the *Arsenic* cast's backstage life. She'll be next to star in a knock-'em dead showstopper scene if she doesn't watch it, because theatrical murderers never play fair."

~~back cover

I hate this sort of cutsie, tongue-in-cheek back cover reviews!

The plot remains the same, but the cast of characters definitely gets better! The "pompous prosecutor" is so overdrawn he's hysterical, and Henny Brawley definitely hits her stride as a sleuth of many colors, imitating her favorite literary investigators to a tee.

I must say that Ms. Hart certainly knows her mysteries -- there are many titles dropped throughout the book, from across all the mystery genres. Just investigating those alone is worth the read.

Deb says

I love the Death On Demand series

Annie and Max Darling are a delightful couple. The name dropping of all the great sleuths and mystery writers is filling out my reading list.

Jessica says

It's so formulaic it's hard to enjoy it.

Priya says

After a jumble of characters and too many annoying and unnecessary author-references, this book tied up neatly at the end.

Was glad to see the end of it as I do not enjoy a theatre/stage murder as much.

Kevin says

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Something Wicked (Death On Demand #3)

Shane Petree ex-surfer star is a total disaster.

He was having an affair with T.K.'s wife and teenaged daughter

Shane's rich wife Sheridan is financing the play so they are stuck with the total jerk. god-awful house lovely on the outside, rotten on the inside.

Hunter Prentiss was a roistering, self-made oil man, Sheridan's father Sam Haznine, the famous Broadway director. is a washed up director Tonelda Divine—and she's going to

Marti says

Quite well-constructed for a cozy. Third in the Death on Demand series.

Bodosika Bodosika says

Its a little bit okay...3star
